

Amendments to the Claims:

Please amend claims 18, 32 and 35 as follows, and please cancel claim 26 without prejudice to continued prosecution. The claims and their status are shown below.

1-17. (Canceled)

18. (Currently Amended) A process for preparing stabilized starch, wherein said process comprises the following steps:

a) treating starch with an amount of a reactant effective to convert organoleptic impurities and/or precursors of organoleptic impurities into hydrolyzed or oxidatively-degraded organoleptic impurities and/or hydrolyzed or oxidatively-degraded precursors of organoleptic impurities, respectively, thereby producing converted starch, wherein said reactant is selected from the group consisting of proteases, lipases, hydrogen peroxide, chlorine-free oxidants, alkaline solution, alkaline aqueous solution, and mixtures thereof.

b) bleaching said converted starch, thereby producing stabilized starch, and

c) recovering said stabilized starch, wherein said stabilized starch has improved viscosity stability and/or improved setting properties upon cooling compared to starch produced in the absence of the treating step a).

19. (Previously presented) The process of claim 18, wherein said bleaching step is performed with 100 ppm - 8000 ppm (based on dry starch substance) of active chlorine.

20. (Previously Presented) The process of claim 19, wherein said bleaching step is performed at a temperature of from about 5°C to about 60°C.

21. (Previously Presented) The process of claim 19, wherein said bleaching step is performed at a temperature of from about 10°C to about 55°C.

22. (Previously Presented) The process of claim 19, wherein said bleaching step is performed at a pH of from about 3 to about 12.

23. (Previously Presented) The process of claim 19, wherein said bleaching step is performed at a pH of from about 7.5 to about 11.5.

24. (Previously Presented) The process of claim 19, wherein said bleaching step is performed at a pH of from about 8.5 to about 11.

25. (Previously Presented) The process of claim 19, wherein said bleaching step is performed for up to 24 hours.

26. (Canceled)

27. (Previously Presented) The process of claim 18, wherein said reactant is a protease.

28. (Previously Presented) The process of claim 18, wherein said reactant is an endoprotease.

29. (Canceled)

30. (Previously Presented) The process of claim 18, wherein the starch is a waxy starch.

31. (Previously Presented) The process of claim 18, wherein the starch is a regular corn starch.

32. (Currently Amended) A process for preparing stabilized starch, wherein said process comprises the following steps:

a) treating starch with an amount of a reactant effective to convert organoleptic impurities and/or precursors of organoleptic impurities into hydrolyzed or oxidatively-degraded organoleptic impurities and/or hydrolyzed or oxidatively-degraded precursors of organoleptic impurities, respectively, thereby producing converted starch, wherein said starch comprises from about 0.2% to about 0.4% w/w protein, wherein said reactant is selected from the group consisting of proteases, lipases, hydrogen peroxide, chlorine-free oxidants, alkaline solution, alkaline aqueous solution, and mixtures thereof, and

b) bleaching said converted starch, thereby producing stabilized starch, wherein said bleaching is performed in the presence of from about 500 ppm to about 4000 ppm (based on dry starch) active chlorine, wherein said bleaching step is performed at a pH of from about 3.0 to about 11.5 and at a temperature of from about 5°C to about 60°C, wherein said bleaching step is performed for up to 24 hours, and

c) recovering said stabilized starches, wherein said stabilized starch has improved viscosity stability and/or improved setting properties upon cooling compared to starch produced in the absence of the treating step a).

33. (Previously Presented) The process of claim 32, wherein said bleaching step is performed at a pH of from about 8.5 to about 10.5.

34. (Previously Presented) The process of claim 32, wherein said bleaching step is performed at a temperature of from about 10°C to about 55°C.

35. (Currently Amended) A process for bleaching starch, wherein said process comprises the following steps:

a) treating starch with an amount of reactant effective to convert organoleptic impurities and/or precursors of organoleptic impurities into hydrolyzed or oxidatively-degraded organoleptic impurities and/or hydrolyzed or oxidatively-degraded precursors of organoleptic impurities, respectively, thereby producing converted starch, wherein said starch comprises from about 0.25% to about 0.30% w/w protein, wherein said reactant is selected from the group consisting of proteases, lipases, hydrogen peroxide, chlorine-free oxidants, alkaline solution, alkaline aqueous solution, and mixtures thereof, and

b) bleaching said converted starch, wherein said bleaching is performed in the presence of from about 1000 ppm to about 4000 ppm (based on dry substance of starch) active chlorine, wherein said bleaching step is performed at a pH of from about 8.5 to about 11 and at a temperature of from about 10°C to about 55°C, wherein said bleaching step is performed for up to 24 hours, wherein said stabilized starch has improved viscosity stability and/or improved setting properties upon cooling compared to starch produced in the absence of the treating step a).

36. (Previously Presented) The process of claim 35, wherein said bleaching step is performed at a pH of from about 9.0 to about 10.0.

37. (Previously presented) A process for preparing stabilized starch, wherein said process comprises the following steps:

a) treating starch with an amount of a protease or a mixture of proteases effective to convert organoleptic impurities and/or precursors of organoleptic impurities into hydrolyzed or oxidatively-degraded organoleptic impurities and/or hydrolyzed or oxidatively-degraded precursors of organoleptic impurities, respectively, thereby producing converted starch, wherein said protease or said mixture of proteases comprises an endoprotease,

b) reacting said converted starch with active chlorine, thereby producing stabilized starch,

c) washing said starch, and
d) optionally drying said starch, wherein said stabilized starch has improved viscosity stability and/or improved setting properties upon cooling compared to starch produced in the absence of the treating step a).

38. (Previously Presented) A sauce comprising from about 1.5% to about 4% stabilized starch produced by the process of claim 18.

39. (Previously Presented) A tablet comprising from about 3% to about 80% stabilized starch produced by the process of claim 18.

40. (Previously Presented) A feed, food, pharma or cosmetic product comprising stabilized starch produced by the process of claim 18.

41. (Previously Presented) The product of claim 40, wherein said food product is selected from the group consisting of sauces, spreads, dressings, soups, convenience food, stabilizers for meat products, bakery products, fillings and creams.

42. (Previously Presented) The product of claim 40, wherein said pharma product is selected from the group consisting of tablets and dusting powder.

43-45. (Canceled)